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Graduate Vocational Courses in Theology



There are a number of courses for graduates which are vocational or which can be used in a vocational way. Some are designed in particular for those seeking ordination or wanting to continue to reflect upon the practice of ministry and are shared among those institutions in Oxford which prepare candidates for ministry

MTh (Master of Theology) in Applied Theology

At the heart of vocational postgraduate theological study is the MTh. This course may be taken either full-time in two years, or part-time in three or four years—or in a combination of full and part-time.

It is designed to enable theological reflection upon experience in pastoral practice, mainly but not only in the context of ministry in the Church. It may be taken by those who hold a pastoral appointment at present, or by students who can include a period of approved pastoral experience in their course of study for the MTh (as when preparing for ordination, for instance). The course group typically involves those preparing for ordination or recently ordained as Baptists and in other traditions, as well as others who are on the course to enhance lay ministry or their career development—it's a stimulating group!

Candidates must have a good degree in theology, or hold an equivalent theological qualification. The degree is awarded on the successful completion of four 7,000 word essays relating to taught courses and a thesis of 15,000 to 20,000 words.

colonialism and post-modernity are explored.

11. *Inter-Faith Dialogue*

The encounter of faith communities and the development of inter-faith dialogue in plural societies is the focus of this paper, as students critically examine models of dialogue and may, if they wish, focus on the relationship of Christianity to one other faith tradition.



12. *Ecclesiology in an Ecumenical Context*

This paper examines the doctrines of the Church, the ministry and the sacraments in their relationship to the concrete realities of the life of the Church and the nature of its authority.

Part Two

The second part of the MTh consists of a dissertation of between 15,000 and 20,000 words on an aspect of applied theology. The title and area of research is chosen by the student and agreed by the MTh Examiners.



7. Christian Spirituality

Students explore critically the theological issues raised by some traditions of Christian prayer and devotion. Insights from the human sciences and other disciplines are sometimes employed. Different models of spiritual growth and spiritual

guidance, and the theologies of ministry implicit within them, are also considered.

8. Liturgy and Worship

The role of liturgy within Christian life, mission and discipleship is explored, drawing, when appropriate, on insights from other disciplines. Topics might include the role of symbol, the relationship between liturgy and creativity, and the interaction between liturgy and culture.

9. Christian Ethics

What is the relationship between Christianity and the theory and practice of the moral life? Students seek answers to this question and explore questions of fundamental moral theology, and address specific ethical issues, in the light of current thought across the Christian traditions.



10. Mission in the Modern World

Students study the mission of the Church in the light of the mission of God and in the context of contemporary societies and cultures. The inter-relationship of various aspects of mission such as evangelism, social and political action, and dialogue with other faiths and ideologies is considered. The implications for mission of issues such as secularisation, urbanisation, post-

The Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Theology

This is awarded on the successful completion of Part I of the MTh in Applied Theology. The course may be taken either full-time in one year, or part-time in two years.

Students take four papers in part 1 of the MTh or on the Postgraduate Diploma, including the first two as compulsory papers.

The Postgraduate Diploma in Theology

This is different from the Diploma in Applied Theology (mentioned above) and is not a vocational course as such, but can act as a 'conversion course' to theology. This is a one year full time or two year part-time course open to those with a good degree in another subject. Three papers are studied, from a choice for 10, and are examined by three 3-hour written examinations at the end of the year, in a very similar way to the BA in Theology.

A high mark in the PG Dip can then open the way for an application to the MTh.

Teaching

The exact nature of the teaching varies from course to the course. The MTh has classes on Friday mornings for the first year shared with others across the University taking the MTh. Subsequently there is more emphasis on individual study guided by a tutor.

The PGDip is taught more by tutorial, in the traditional Oxford style, supported by some appropriate University lectures. This will require the writing of 'formational essays' which are shared and discussed with a tutor in a tutorial.

Syllabus for the MTh and Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Theology

Part One

1. *Doctrine, Context and Practice*

This paper explores the interrelationship between Christian doctrine and Christian practice in historical and social context.

2. *Experiential project with theological reflection*

Students offer a theological evaluation of a project undertaken in either a church or secular setting in which they share in the concerns and experiences of those involved. They also normally submit a portfolio of material which should include relevant documentation and one or more case studies based upon their work and observation.

3. *Sociology of Religion*

Here the main methods of the study of religion in relation to modern society are considered alongside such topics as secularisation, religious organisation, civil religion, fundamentalism and relationship between sociology and the different areas of theological study.

4. *Pastoral Psychology*

The paper explores the contribution of psychological studies to pastoral understanding and practice; the principles of psychological explication with particular reference to the psychology of religious experience; the importance of the psychological dimension in particular areas of pastoral concern, for instance human development, marriage, sickness, death and bereavement.

5. *Science and Faith in the Modern World*

Students study the interrelationships between Christian theology and the natural sciences, with special reference to the implications for contemporary Christian practice. They consider methodological issues in their own right, and such specific topics as the implications of evolutionary theory, or developments in fundamental physics, for the Christian doctrine of creation.



6. *The Use of the Bible*

The use of the Bible in preaching, worship, and ethics form part of this paper's concern, alongside the diversity in the Bible and hermeneutics and pastoral ministry.